

Middletown Township Public Schools

High School North and South English Departments

Middletown, NJ 07748



Carol Buckley
Assistant Principal – North
(732) 706-6061 x1221



Marie Caldaro
Assistant Principal – South
(732) 706-6111 x2162

District Website: <http://www.middletownk12.org>

Karen L. Bilbao
Superintendent of Schools

Fred Carrigg
Assistant Superintendent for Accountability

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Parents and Junior Students, Class of 2011:

All **junior** students entering High School North or High School South in September 2009 are required to read **two novels** this summer. Read and follow the directions below:

11 Honors' students must read: *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck
All other grade 11 levels must read: *The Last Days of Summer* by Steve Kluger

For the above stated novels, all students **must submit** a completed **reader response journal** to their English teacher **on or before the first Monday of school**. The student is to:

- Choose ten (10) quotations from the text and respond to each, explaining their significance in the overall context of the novel and/or give a personal response to the quote.
- Quotes must be spread out over the entirety of the book (i.e., the quotes cannot come from the first few chapters).
- Students may use the attached reader-response form or type their responses in the same format.

In addition, all junior students **must choose and read one book*** from the following list. English teachers will assess the second book in September.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers
Nickel & Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America
by Barbara Ehrenreich

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen
Monster by Walter Dean Myers
The Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Books may be borrowed from the Middletown Public Library. The books may, also, be purchased at Barnes and Noble (in Holmdel or Eatontown) or at Borders (in Eatontown). All locations have received requests from us to have the books in stock.

Any questions should be directed to the Assistant Principals of Curriculum at High School North or High School South.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Buckley, Assistant Principal
High School North

Marie Caldaro, Assistant Principal
High School South

*See attached page for book descriptions.

CC: Karen Bilbao
Fred Carrigg

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

This sprawling and often brutal novel, set in the rich farmlands of California's Salinas Valley, follows the intertwined destinies of two families--the Trasks and the Hamiltons--whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel.

The Last Days of Summer by Steve Kluger

Mixing nostalgia, baseball and a boy's friendship with a 1940s baseball star, this hysterically funny, inventive, and sentimental novel consists entirely of letters, fictional newspaper clippings, telegrams, war dispatches, report cards and other documentary fragments. Growing up Jewish in a tough, Italian Brooklyn neighborhood, Joey Margolis is troubled by anti-Semitic neighbors, by Hitler's rising power, by his parents' divorce and by his absent cad of a father. Craving a surrogate dad, Joey strikes up a correspondence with Wisconsin-born New York Giants slugger Charlie Banks. The boy's outrageous fibs, tough-guy posturing, and desperate pleas grab the reluctant attention of the superstar, whose racy vernacular guy-talk (peppered with amusing misspellings and misusages) hints at his deepening affection for Joey.

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

Why do so many girls allow themselves to get into abusive relationships--and what keeps them there? In this riveting novel, Sarah Dessen searches for understanding and answers. Caught in a trap that is baited with love and need, Caitlin must frantically manage her every action to avoid being hit by the hands that once seemed so gentle. All around her are women who care--best friends, mother, sister, mentor--but shame keeps her from confiding in any of them, especially Cass, her brilliant older sister, whose own flight from home had seemed to point the way.

Monster by Walter Dean Myers

Monster is what the prosecutor called 16-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the "all clear" to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time? In this innovative novel by Walter Dean Myers, the reader becomes both juror and witness during the trial of Steve's life. To calm his nerves as he sits in the courtroom, aspiring filmmaker Steve chronicles the proceedings in movie script format. Interspersed throughout his screenplay are journal writings that provide insight into Steve's life before the murder and his feelings about being held in prison during the trial.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist--books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a breathtaking story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last thirty years -- from the Soviet invasion to the reign of the Taliban to post-Taliban rebuilding -- that puts the violence, fear, hope and faith of this country in intimate, human terms. It is a tale of two generations of characters brought jarringly together by the tragic sweep of war, where personal lives -- the struggle to survive, raise a family, find happiness -- are inextricable from the history playing out around them. Propelled by the same storytelling instinct that made *The Kite Runner* a beloved classic, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once a remarkable chronicle of three decades of Afghan history and a deeply moving account of family and friendship.

Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers

A coming-of-age tale for young adults set in the trenches of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, this is the story of Perry, a Harlem teenager who volunteers for the service when his dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines, Perry and his platoon come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horror of warfare. But violence and death aren't the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why black troops are given the most dangerous assignments, and why the U. S. is even there at all.

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen

As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlina, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

Nickel & Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich

Millions of Americans work for poverty-level wages, and one day Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that any job equals a better life. But how can anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6 to \$7 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich moved from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, taking the cheapest lodgings available and accepting work as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide, and Wal-Mart salesperson. She soon discovered that even the "lowliest" occupations require exhausting mental and physical efforts. And one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors. *Nickel and Dimed* reveals low-wage America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and surprising generosity--a land of Big Boxes, fast food, and a thousand desperate strategies for survival. Instantly acclaimed for its insight, humor, and passion, this book is changing the way America perceives its working poor.

The Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman

When Germany invaded Poland, Stuka bombers devastated Warsaw—and the city's zoo along with it. With most of their animals dead, zookeepers Jan and Antonina Zabinski began smuggling Jews into empty cages. Another dozen "guests" hid inside the Zabinskis' villa, emerging after dark for dinner, socializing, and, during rare moments of calm, piano concerts. Jan, active in the Polish resistance, kept ammunition buried in the elephant enclosure and stashed explosives in the animal hospital.

Reader Response Journal

Page #	Quote	Significance/Reaction
Quote 1		
Quote 2		
Quote 3		

Quote 4		
Quote 5		
Quote 6		
Quote 7		

Quote 8		
Quote 9		
Quote 10		